



LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NAME:

Island County Public Health (ICPH)

ADDRESS:

PO Box 5000 Coupeville, WA 98239

PHONE NUMBER:

360-679-7350

SIZE:

POPULATION SERVED:

PROJECT TITLE:

Streamlining Payment Processes to Improve Customer Satisfaction

## PLAN

Identify an opportunity and Plan for Improvement

### 1. Getting Started

ICPH manages an On-Site Sewage (OSS) Repair Assistance Program to help homeowners repair or replace failing on-site sewage systems. Seventy percent of Island County residents have septic systems and proper functioning is imperative for clean drinking water, disease prevention and protection of marine ecosystems within their watershed. The process to reimburse contractors after a sewage system is repaired takes too long for customer satisfaction, resulting in complaints to ICPH staff and Island County Commissioners. This has resulted in a shortage of contractors willing to help families repair their septic systems through the program.

### 2. Assemble the Team

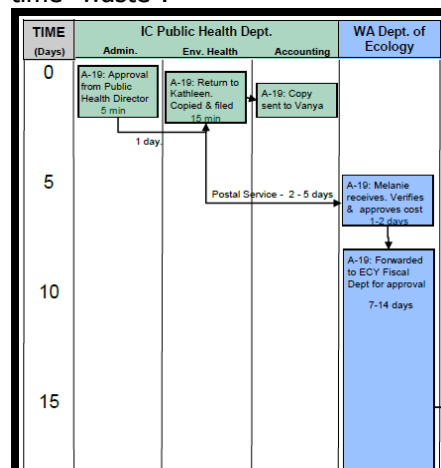
ICPH's Accounting Supervisor, Environmental Health Director, Loan Program Supervisor, and Assessment Director formed a QI Team to address poor customer satisfaction within the OSS Loan Program.

### 3. Examine the Current Approach

QI Team members collected qualitative data through conversations with five other departments that contribute to the current process. Quantitative data was generated from dated documents for 29 loans processed between 2011 and 2013.

A Swim Lane Diagram showing total number of process steps

process with ownership and length of time for each step was generated from collected data. Mean and range were calculated for each step from the quantitative data. We identified steps with the greatest time "waste".



### 4. Identify Potential Solutions

The QI Team shared analyzed data with all stakeholders in small group meetings to brainstorm solutions. Potentials were examined for projected time-savings, and both direct and indirect costs to all stakeholders. Vetted solutions were presented to stakeholders until consensus for one proposal was attained that balanced costs and time-savings.

### 5. Develop an Improvement Theory

Time savings came by taking a linear process and transforming it into two concurrent processes. No original steps were eliminated, but processes occurring in separate departments could take place during the same time block.

## DO

Test the Theory for Improvement

### 6. Test the Theory

The time statistics generated for each step of the current payment process were used to estimate time savings for the proposed solution.

## STUDY

Use Data to Study Results of the Test

### 7. Study the Results

Running processes concurrently is projected to result in a 50% decrease in payment process time, from an average of 30 days to 15 days.

## ACT

Standardize the Improvement and Establish Future Plans

### 8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory

The ICPH QI Team confidently brought a solution before the Board of Island County Commissioners on August 7<sup>th</sup> that is projected to decrease the contractor payment process time by 50%. The new contractor payment process was initiated hours after final approval.

### 9. Establish Future Plans

ICPH staff established a monitoring system to continue to collect data on the amount of time it takes to reimburse contractors. Feedback will be collected from contractors and all stakeholders regarding the new process. Initially, quarterly reports will be generated by our accounting and OSS Loan staff for continued monitoring.